



**Statement by H.E. Simon Coveney, TD,
Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of Defence of Ireland**

High-level segment of the 49th session of the Human Rights Council

02 March 2022

Mr President, High Commissioner

It's a privilege to address this Human Rights Council and during this session Ireland will engage with the full agenda of the Council.

But today, I want to focus my remarks on the attacks on Ukraine.

By invading Ukraine, and violating its sovereignty and territorial integrity, the Russian Federation, facilitated by Belarus, is flagrantly violating the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Ireland condemns utterly the Russian Federation's further invasion of Ukraine.

This military action has already resulted in severe violations of the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of the people of Ukraine.

Civilians are bearing the brunt of this conflict.

Every day we are witnessing rising casualties, including the killing and injuring of children in planned, targeted attacks using heavy explosives in crowded cities.

People's homes are being destroyed. Civilian infrastructure is being targeted. Hundreds of thousands of people are left without electricity, water, or basic supplies.

We have been shocked by the numbers of people, mainly women and children, fleeing their homes. And these numbers are likely to grow dramatically.

The Russian Federation must comply with its obligations under international human rights law and international humanitarian law. And it must be held accountable for violations it has already committed.

The human rights obligations of Russia and Belarus apply equally within their own borders. We condemn the crackdowns on those exercising their fundamental freedoms, including those Russian and Belarussian citizens bravely protesting against these acts of war.

The fundamental freedoms of expression, peaceful assembly and association must, of course, be protected.

This crisis will only be resolved through political dialogue. We must see an end to Russia's assault on Ukraine, its people and its democratic institutions. Peace and security cannot be achieved without the full protection of human rights and the recognition of the centrality of International Human Rights Law.

We call for an immediate ceasefire, unconditional withdrawal of Russian forces, full respect for human rights and accountability for violations committed.

The foundation on which this Council is built is being challenged. Now is the time to live up to our responsibilities and Ireland stands in full solidarity with the people of Ukraine. And, I urge all Council members to do the same.

Thank you very much.